

May 29, 1953.

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Dear Sir:

At the plebiscite on Thursday, May 28, the new Danish Constitution was adopted by the votes of 46 per cent of all voters. According to the present Constitution, at least 45 per cent of all voters had to vote for a proposed Constitution in order to carry it. 1,181,173 voters voted yes for the new Constitution and 318,075 voted no. At the same time, a plebiscite was held to decide whether the future voting age was to be 23 or 21 years of age. 838,364 voters voted for 23 years and 698,339 voted for 21 years; accordingly, the voting age will be 23 years.

The new Constitution will be signed by the King on the Danish Constitution Day, June 5. The most important changes made by the new Constitution are that the Rigsdag will consist in the future of a single chamber of 179 members, that 1/3 of the members of the Rigsdag are able to have a bill passed by a majority submitted to a plebiscite. Excepted from this provision, however, are tax bills, bills providing for the fulfillment of existing international treaties and bills for expropriation. The fact that bills for expropriation cannot be submitted to a plebiscite is accounted for by the circumstances that a minority in the Rigsdag is able to have the final adoption of such bills postponed until after elections are held to the Rigsdag.

Among further changes are the adoption of female right of succession to the Danish throne. Greenland, previously a colony, is made a part of Denmark. Furthermore, the Rigsdag is empowered to give up parts of Danish sovereignty to international authorities, established through mutual agreement with other states. Such a transfer of sovereignty requires a 5/6 majority.

The first elections under the new Constitution will be held in September, and it is likely that the Government of Erik Eriksen will continue in power until then.

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Farming Production

While sunshine and rain, warm weather and cold are alternating and giving us real farmers' weather promising another large crop in Denmark and while our government and economic administration is in constitutional hibernation, there is perhaps time to dwell for a moment on one of the most important features of the Danish economy, the development of agricultural productivity during the last 40 years.

In the five-year period, 1910-1914, the Danish harvest averaged 66.6 mill. crop units, of which 20.9 kernel yield. In 1930-34 the average was 106.6 mill. crop units, of which 31.2 mill. kernel, in 1945-49, the average was 118.0 mill., of which 34.8 mill. kernel. During each of the last three years, the yield was as follows: 1950: 125.9 mill. and 35.8 mill., in 1951: 124.9 mill. and 36.6 mill., and in 1952: 131.0 mill. and 43.3 mill.

Thus, during the last 40 years, the harvest of all crops on Danish soil has doubled. However, it should be recalled in this connection, that South Greenland rejoined Denmark in 1932, resulting in an increase of 5 mill. crop units. From 1912 to 1938, the area under cultivation increased somewhat but since 1939, it has been declining. The return of grain of all kinds increased from 18.4 crop units per hectare in 1912 to 27.8 in 1950 and 28.8 in 1951. For grass and green crops, the rise is just as convincing, while the yield of roots per hectare has risen at a slower rate.

This increase in primary agricultural production coincided with a sharp decrease in agricultural manpower. In 1923, the number of permanent agricultural employees, including relatives and children under 15, was estimated at 303,000, in 1944, the figure had dropped to 261,000 and in February, 1953 to 164,000.

This violent reduction in manpower coupled with the sharp increase in primary production bears striking witness to the progress made by mechanization and more efficient methods of operation in agriculture.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the yield per hectare of all types of grain in Denmark is the highest in the world. It is well over double the European average and slightly more than twice the average in North and Central America.

Farm production of animal products has not risen in step with the progress of plant production. The output of milk rose from 3.5 mill. kg. in 1910-14 to about 5 mill. kg. in 1952 but in 1930-34 it amounted to 5.4 mill. kg. Production of bacon and pork rose from 212 mill. kg. in 1910-14 to 380 mill. kg. in 1952 but in 1930-34 it reached 468 mill. kg. Egg production has tripled since 1910-14 when it was 40 mill. kg. in 1952, it was 124 mill. kg. and in 1935-39 120 mill. kg. Meat production rose from 113 mill. kg. in 1910-14 to 179 mill. kg. in 1952 and it has not been larger in any pre-war year. But partly because of the large plant production and partly because of changes in feeding methods, the use of imported feeding stuffs has been considerably reduced. Thus, grain imports amounted to 7.4 mill. hectokilogs. in 1910-14, 13.6 mill. hkg. in 1930-34, but only 2.5 mill. hkg. in 1952. The corresponding figures for imports of oil cakes were 5.3 mill. hkg., 7.6 mill. hkg. and 4.4 mill. hkg.

The textile situation

The upward trend in retail sales of textile goods continued in April. The average index for sales of textile goods in the first four months of the year was 93 (base: the monthly average in 1951) as compared with 88 in 1952, or an increase of 6 per cent. For men's ready made clothing and underwear, the index rose in the same four months from 82 to 85, or about 5 per cent.

This improvement in retail trade involved a similar improvement for whole-sale trade and in manufacturing. Thus, the index of textile production in the first three months of the year averaged 112 or 10 per cent above last year. For clothing, the index was 118, or an increase of 8 per cent.

The radio industry

This is the slack season for the radio industry. However, 1952 was a fairly good year, and production of radio receivers was estimated at about 60,000. Exports of radios amounted to 5.9 mill. kr. in 1952, but during the first three months of 1953, exports were only 384,000 kr. Exports of parts for radio receivers amounted to 16.7 mill. kr. in 1952 but in January-March this year, exports were only 2.5 mill. kr. Competition on export markets is exceptionally severe.

The industry suffered the disappointment that its attempt to get a share in the large off-shore orders for radio equipment failed, although a great deal of work had been done in the industry to prepare really cheap offers through cooperation between the factories.

Now it is hoped that a positive decision will be reached before long in the question of expanding television. The matter is before the Minister of Finance, and now that the constitutional plebiscite has been held, there should be time to reach a decision. At any rate, the industry is ready to make a big effort, and practically all the parts except the tubes can be produced here in Denmark.

Yours sincerely,

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